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The writer has many times noticed the large amount of oil which covers the flat, killing vegetation and sending out a disagreeable bituminous odor. I had always supposed that the oil must represent the concentration from cotton waste, etc., collected there year after year, especially as large car shops are nearby. The true explanation, bringing out as it does the retention of the oil by the clay and the response to ground water conditions, seemed to make a note of the facts worth placing on record.

HOMER P. LITTLE

WATERVILLE, MAINE

THE RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT

THERE are probably a good many successful scientific men in America who will echo in some measure the sentiments expressed by W. E. Allen in a recent issue of *SCIENCE*. There certainly should be some method of distinguishing individuals who have attained eminence in their respective lines irrespective of whether they hold a doctor's degree or not. Even the holder of such degrees may well join in a movement to distinguish the real workers from those who have merely secured degrees. It is clear that the doctor's degree does not necessarily indicate exceptional merit; in fact the degree itself has varying shades of importance. A man who has been educated in a prominent institution is much more inclined to write the name of the university after the degree than he is if his university is less prominent.

To the man with a degree, it may seem absurd for others who are not doctors to suggest a distinguishing mark for meritorious work but if such marks are not desirable, why attach college and university degrees to an individual at all? Is the mere fact that he has gone through a prescribed course in a university to be forever remembered regardless of the quality of his work in after years, or shall we demand that he measure up to his promises when the degree was conferred; in short, is it schooling or achievement that shall count?

As time goes on and doctors continue to increase in numbers, some such distinction as

has been suggested will become increasingly desirable. This seems a good time to do something about it.

WILLARD N. CLUTE

JOLIET, ILL.

CLOUDS

SINCE the many forms of fog and cloud reveal, as obviously nothing else can, the motions and conditions of the atmosphere, it would seem that their every type must have been the object of innumerable photographic records, and that nothing could be easier than to make a reasonably complete collection of such photographs.

This, however, at least so far as making the collection is concerned, is not the case. Some clouds, such as the mammato-cumuli, the scarf-like wisps that form above thunder heads, the tornado's funnel and several others of somewhat infrequent occurrence appear rarely to be photographed—I have never seen a good photograph of any one of them—while even the more common clouds seem generally to be photographed with inadequate equipment.

To obtain the best photographs of cirri, for instance, that is, to secure such contrast that the finer details may be seen, it is absolutely necessary to use some sort of device by which the maximum amount of polarized sky light may be cut out. Needless to say this is seldom done. Similarly, if one would accentuate the beauty of his cloud picture by including an interesting landscape it is obvious that he must use a suitable ray filter. Finally, as the clouds are drifting, often with considerable velocity, the exposures must be practically instantaneous.

But difficult as photographing clouds may be surely some enthusiasts must have accumulated many fine pictures of them, and I am taking this opportunity of asking if those who have exceptionally fine cloud and fog pictures will not kindly write to me of them, as I am anxious to obtain good examples of every type for the purpose of study and comparison. Of course none would be reproduced without permission and proper acknowledgment.

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